

Specification

Novelty Plush Stuffed Toy / Utility Case

5 Background of the Invention

The present invention is directed toward the addition of utility to stuffed or plush toys as well as broadening the scope of market for existing utility and storage items. The most basic toy is represented by the stuffed or plush category. This toy category consists of a wide range of representations such as animals, imaginary objects or beings, insects, foods, tools and anything else recognizable by the user. The item may be an accurate representation or a characterization designed to enhance a specific characteristic, the goal of said enhancement to provide entertainment value. This toy group, although typically associated with children, is embraced at a more advanced age level due to commonly accepted definitions of style and collectability. These characteristics are also well known.

Children and people of all ages are placing additional value on functionality. Changes in day-to-day life in terms of how we entertain ourselves, how we move about freely and how we carry things of importance with us have lead to the creation of many utility and storage items. The need to conserve resources and provide economy as well as convenience of function has led to a growing emphasis on value-added enhancements to day-to-day items. The present invention addresses the addition of this functionality to the arena of stuffed or plush items while retaining the characteristics that enable these items to be embraced by a broad range of age groups. This addition of functionality to a classification of item primarily known mostly for aesthetic values opens new markets for the functional items while helping the consumer consolidate wants with needs.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention has been developed to overcome the deficiencies of the prior art discussed above. It is the object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles displaying a level of aesthetics pleasing to many age groups.

It is a further object of the invention to provide three dimensional stuffed or plush articles designed to accentuate the portly appearance of said articles in the area of an implied stomach or posterior, where said characteristic appears naturally in nature or in an aesthetic interpretation of a not-natural object or being; where said portly appearance lends further positive aesthetic appeal to an object already defined as a toy.

It is a further object of the invention to provide three dimensional stuffed or plush articles designed to accentuate the portly appearance of certain animals in the area of the stomach or posterior, where said characteristic appears naturally in nature or in an aesthetic interpretation of a not-natural object or being, where said characterization of portly appearance provides space for the addition of items providing utility such as, but not limited to, CD Sleeves, Photo Sleeves and Paper notes via utilization of a product-holder interface panel.

It is a further object of the invention to provide three dimensional stuffed or plush articles designed to allow the inclusion of articles within standardized containing structures, said structures attached to a product-holder interface panel. Said articles may be but are not limited to stationery items, jewelry, and consumable food items.

It is a further object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles featuring handles for ease of portability.

It is a further object of this invention to provide three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles that are relatively inexpensive to manufacture.

It is a further object of this invention to provide
5 three-dimensional stuffed or plush articles easily differentiated from the simple addition of plush representations to existing items of utility as a decoration.

In accordance with the illustrative embodiments,
demonstrating features and advantages of the present invention,
10 there is provided a plush or stuffed article designed as a representation of some real or imaginary animal, being or item. Said plush or stuffed article will have an identified top, bottom, right, left, front and backside easily identified such as in the instance of an animal, or said plush or stuffed article may have
15 orientation of sides defined by application of the inventive design. In both cases one side of said article now called the primary side would have attached a secondary assembly of complementary fabric and design, said secondary assembly incorporating the aesthetic values of the aforementioned plush or
20 stuffed article.

The secondary assembly is formed from two halves hingedly attached at a common point via sewn stitching. The front half of the secondary assembly will in its final form be visible and form a part of the aesthetic value of the finished product. This front
25 half of the secondary assembly is formed from two layers of fabric material, stitched together to form a fully encased envelope suitable for the addition of fabric or synthetic fillers such as but not limited to polyester. Said fillers serve two functions, the first of which is protection of the final enclosed objects of
30 additional utility; the second of which is to create a thickening effect easily adjusted to enhance the size of the assembly, said assembly forming a part of the finished object in the stomach or posterior area. The second half of the secondary assembly is formed from two layers of fabric material stitched together with

none of the aforementioned filler. Each of said halves then has attached thereto another layer of fabric material via sewn stitching; sized to form a first pocket on one half and a second pocket on the other half. The hingedly attached first and second
5 halves will be oriented such that when placed in contact and parallel to one another in the closed position, the first and second pockets will come in contact with one another and provide access from the same direction. Said first and second pockets will furthermore be sized to provide secure placement of a product-
10 holder interface panel serving as a generic interface between the secondary assembly and product holders such as but not limited to a set of CD sleeves. Furthermore, the hingedly attached secondary assembly will have attached around the circumference of said secondary assembly a closure mechanism such as but not limited to
15 commonly used fabric zippers. Thus the secondary assembly may be rendered accessible or inaccessible via movement of the zipper or other closure device. This rendering will be utilized in the inventive stuffed or plush article in ways such as but not limited to the creation of an opening pouch in the instance of a stuffed
20 animal.

The secondary assembly will be sized such as to complement the style and aesthetics of the stuffed or plush article when used in conjunction with said stuffed or plush article. Taking the aesthetics into consideration, there will be a choice of
25 side on the stuffed or plush article, henceforth known as the primary side. On this primary side the secondary assembly will be attached to a specific position described as the designated attachment area using sewn stitching forming a final assembly of the previously existing plush or stuffed article and the secondary
30 assembly, imparting the functionality of the secondary assembly while adding to or not detracting from the aesthetics of the plush or stuffed article. This final assembly of stuffed or plush article with secondary assembly will be utilized aesthetically in ways such as but not limited to the display of an opening pouch in

the instance of a stuffed animal while product holders attached to the product holder interface panel provide storage utility to the heretofore non-utilitarian stuffed or plush item.

Description of the Several Views of the Drawing

For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the accompanying drawings one form that is presently preferred; it being understood that the invention is not intended to be limited to the precise arrangements and means shown.

FIG. 1 is a plain view of a plush article in accordance with an embodiment of this invention, said plush article representing a penguin and said plain view representing the primary side of the plush article.

FIG. 2 is a back view of the article of FIG. 1 designated for the purpose of this embodiment of the inventive plush stuffed toy or utility case.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the secondary assembly shown in the closed position.

FIG. 4 is an elevated frontal view of the secondary assembly shown in Fig. 3 in an open position, showing in detail two layers of fabric material on the front half, stitched together to form a fully encased envelope suitable for the addition of fabric or synthetic fillers such as but not limited to polyester.

FIG 4A is an elevated frontal view of the secondary assembly shown in Fig. 3 in an open position, showing both first and second pockets as well as zipper closure.

FIG. 5 is an elevated side view of the relative positions of the plush or stuffed article of FIG. 1 and the closed secondary assembly shown in Fig. 4 prior to final assembly of the two.

FIG. 6 is a side view of the plush article shown in FIG. 2 showing the completed assembly of said plush article with closed secondary assembly shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a front view showing the plush article and secondary assembly as described in FIG. 5 and FIG. 6 with the secondary assembly shown in open position.

FIG. 8 is an elevated frontal view of a product-holder interface panel to which elements of functionality are attached.

FIG. 9 is an elevated side view of the product-holder interface panel of FIG. 8 inserted into both first and second
5 pockets of secondary assembly shown in FIG. 4A after said secondary assembly has been attached to stuffed or plush article as shown in FIG. 5.

FIG. 10 shows the plush article and secondary assembly of FIG. 7 with the addition of the product-holder interface panel of
10 FIG. 8, said product-holder interface panel displaying one embodiment of the invention, the attachment of CD storage sleeves to the product-holder interface panel.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Considering FIGS. 1 thru 10 inclusive, there is illustrated in FIG. 1 one singular embodiment of a plush or stuffed article 10 showing a front side designated as the primary side for this embodiment of the invention; designed to utilize the aesthetic appreciation of a characterization of a penguin. This embodiment is representative of a broad category of plush or stuffed toy, categorized by virtue of construction consisting of a soft outer covering composed of sections of cloth sewn together forming pockets then filled with materials of varying compressibility and finally joined at common seams and sewn to render the outer surface continuous. A common characteristic of the final form is the ability to deform under pressure in a temporary fashion, reversible when said pressure is released. These characteristics of plush or stuffed articles are subject to such broad interpretations using a wide range of materials and configurations that the specifics concerning the plush or stuffed item cannot be considered a part of this invention, rather the invention must be considered the utilization and means of utilization of secondary items described herein in conjunction with any plush or stuffed item exhibiting these aesthetic values herein described. In similar fashion, the art and craft of sewing as described herein as a method of attachment is so commonplace as to be rendered generic, and as such no attempt will be made to illustrate or define the actual methodology of creating sewn stitching as used to provide closure and attachment between cloth items.

The illustrated and relatively simple embodiment of the invention for purpose of this document has a backside 12 shown in FIG. 2.

Fig. 3 shows secondary assembly 14 consisting of front of secondary assembly 16 and back of secondary assembly 18 hingedly attached at the sewn juncture 42 of said front and back of secondary assembly. An additional layer of fabric material 16A

when placed in superposed relation to the inside surface **16B** of front of secondary assembly **16** provides a space for fabric or synthetic filler material **78** to be inserted. Once the space between inside surface **16B** of front of secondary assembly **16** and front of secondary assembly **16** is filled with said synthetic filler material **78**, stitching along seam **80** provides a secure and permanent enclosure for the storage of synthetic filler material **78**.

Second pocket **22** is manufactured from similar materials as front and back of secondary assembly **16** and **18** and attached thereto by sewn stitching at seam **26**, said seam **26** extending around the circumference of back of secondary assembly **18** from starting point **34** to ending point **36**, the distance between said starting point **34** and ending point **36** described as degrees of a circle, said circle having center point **40** on back of secondary assembly **18** and said measurement of degrees on said circle as measured between starting point **34** to ending point **36** measuring between 210 degrees and 220 degrees. Second pocket **22** as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation forms a first opening **50**.

Zipper closure **28** is shown as the preferred closure mechanism sewn with one mating half **28A** sewn to front of secondary assembly **16** and the other mating half **28B** sewn to back of secondary assembly **18**, thus serving as a closing and securing mechanism.

Fig **3A** details the addition of first pocket **20**, said first pocket **20** manufactured from similar materials as front and back of secondary assembly **16** and **18** and attached to the inside front **16B** of front of secondary assembly **16** at seam **24**, said seam **24** extending around the circumference of front of secondary assembly **16** from starting point **30** to ending point **32**, the distance between said starting point **30** and ending point **32** described as degrees of a circle, said circle having center point **38** on front of secondary assembly **16** and said measurement of degrees on said circle as measured between starting point **30** to ending point **32** measuring between 210 degrees and 220 degrees.

Further demonstrating the quality of two mating halves hingedly attached and the ability of said mating halves to provide a closed or open configuration, the secondary assembly 14 shown in FIG. 3 and Fig 3A is shown in a closed and secured view in FIG. 4 wherein front of secondary assembly 16 has been brought into contact with back of secondary assembly 18 and secured using zipper closure 28.

At this time there is described a carrying handle 44 as shown in FIG. 1. Said carrying handle is provided as a convenience feature and serves to render the embodiment of the invention shown as portable.

Having now provided stuffed or plush article 10 as shown in FIG. 1 and secondary assembly 14 as shown in FIG. 4, the joining of the two said items is shown in FIG. 5. The back of secondary assembly 18 is brought in contact with the designated attachment area 76 of stuffed or plush article 10. The two articles 10 and 14 are then joined via sewn stitching around the circumference of back of secondary assembly 18 along seam 62.

Having taken care in the design, manufacture and aesthetic qualities of secondary assembly 14 as described in FIG. 4, the completed article 64 formed by said secondary assembly 14 described in FIG. 4 and stuffed or plush item 10 described in FIG. 1 is shown in FIG. 6, said FIG. 6 showing the completed article 64 from the side for purposes of noting the relative placement of secondary assembly 14 to stuffed or plush item 10.

The ability to hingedly displace the components of secondary assembly 14 are demonstrated in FIG. 7, a view of the completed article 64 from the front with secondary assembly 14 in the open position as shown in FIG. 3A.

At this time it is noted that first pocket 20 as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation and second pocket 22 as composed of two flexible cloth panels in superposed relation when manipulated in this open position shown in FIG. 7 now form equal and opposing first openings 48 and 50 initially shown in

FIG. 3A. Said first openings are defined as a size meant to allow the insertion of product-holder interface panel 52 pictured in FIG. 8. Said product-holder interface panel 52 in this preferred embodiment is manufactured from thermoplastic material

5 approximately .035 inches in thickness consisting of first end 54, second end 56 and center spine 58 to which may be attached product holder 60 using mechanisms such as but not limited to thermo-adhesive welding techniques. Said product holder 60 is readily enclosed within the space formed when secondary assembly 14
10 pictured in FIG. 4 is in the closed position following the utilization of zipper closure 28 in this preferred embodiment of the invention. Product holder 60 may be designed as a set of sleeves to hold CD Discs or Photographs. Said product holder 60 may additionally be designed to hold paper notes. Additionally, in
15 a generic embodiment of said product holder 60 utilizing geometry specific to the enclosed product it may hold a range of items of convenience such as but not limited to stationery items, jewelry, and consumable food items.

The completed insertion of product-holder interface panel
20 52 into first openings 48 and 50 in first and second pockets 20 and 22 is shown in FIG. 9. It is noted that when first end 54 of product-holder interface panel 52 is inserted into first opening 48 and fully inserted into the pocket it is self-located within the pocket with respect to the seam. It is further noted that when
25 second end 56 is inserted into first opening 50 it is self-located within the pocket with respect to the seam and both ends of product-holder interface panel 52 remain in place within first and second pockets 20 and 22 due in part to friction between product-holder interface panel 52 and first and second pockets 20 and 22.
30 It is further noted that product-holder interface panel 52 is held in place in first and second pockets 20 and 22 because the overall length of product-holder interface panel 52 is designed to be 10% less than the distance from the distal ends of first and second pockets 20 and 22, shown in FIG. 9 as the distance between point 66

and point 68. Thus, for product-holder interface panel 52 to be removed from completed article 64 as shown in FIG. 9, said product-holder interface panel 52 must be deformed via the application of external force such as to make spine 58 on said product-holder interface panel 52 bend such that the obtuse angle formed by the bend faces said spine 58, thus allowing first end 54 and second end 56 of product-holder interface panel 52 to be removed from primary and secondary pockets 20 and 22.

In FIG. 10 the completed article 64 is shown with one embodiment of the inventive product-holder interface panel 52, with a set of sleeves 70 to hold CD Discs 72 permanently attached thereto. Visible in this view is thermo-plastic bond 74 utilized to attach said sleeves 70 to product-holder interface panel 52 at spine 58.